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# McDonald Gets CIA Briefing; Says Soviet/Bulgaria Tie Alive

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The Soviet/Bulgarian connection to the 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II is "very much alive and very much of a problem," Georgia Congressman Larry McDonald said Saturday after a briefing by Central Intelligence Agency officials.

Rep. McDonald, a Democrat from the 7th District, last week sent letters to President Reagan, CIA Director William Casey, and the head of the House Intelligence Committee urging investigations into reports that U.S. government officials are "trying to suppress" information linking the Soviet secret police (the KGB) and the Bulgarian secret police to the shooting of the pope.

"The CIA was upset by the reports (of his request), and the deputy director came over Thursday to brief me," Rep. McDonald said in a telephone interview from his Washington office Saturday.

He said the information supplied by the CIA official is classified as "top secret," and "all I can say is that the Bulgarian and Soviet connection is very much alive and very much of a problem."

"And, I restate the need for a thorough investigation of this so that the American people can get a clear understanding of the type of people we're dealing with at the negotiating table," continued the congressman.

"People need to understand that the head of the Soviet regime is, of course, Yuri Andropov," Rep. McDonald said. "This is the first time in Soviet history that the head of the secret police has survived the job. Up until now, he has always been killed while holding the office."

"Up until now the secret police has always been a staff group subservient to the ruling clique," he said. "This is the first time the head of the secret police has also become head of the regime."

"So, in effect, the secret police has taken over the system."

Relating Andropov's past activities to more recent developments, including the May 1981 attempt on the life of the pope, the Georgia Democrat said Andropov — former the head of the Soviet KGB — has a history of

ruthlessness in dealing with challenges to Soviet activities.

"He started out in a portion of Finland taken over by Russia in World War II," explained Rep. McDonald. "His job was to kill those Finns who did not want to become Sovietized."

Congressman McDonald said further examples of Andropov's ruthlessness are shown during the Soviet chief of state's tenure as ambassador of Hungary in the late '50s.

"He was ambassador to Hungary in 1956 during the Hungarian revolution," explained the conservative congressman. "When Hungary was winning in the first five or six days of the uprising, Andropov invited the top Hungarian Defense minister, Gen. Pal Maleter, to a dinner to discuss the surrender of Russian troops and getting all the Russian troops out of Hungary."

"Once the Hungarian Defense minister got there, and once the meeting and dinner began, the door burst open and KGB units surrounded Maleter, took him outside and in a very short time, he was shot. It was a real Al Capone-type operation."

"When the Hungarian Defense minister was given a guarantee of safe-keeping, that is how he was treated by Andropov," Rep. McDonald continued.

Later, he said, after Soviet troops had swept over Hungary, Prime Minister Imer Nagy fled to the Yugoslav ministry for safety.

"Andropov told Nagy he did not want to create an international incident and said if he came out, he would be protected," said Rep.

The controversy surrounding the shooting of the pope stems from various reports that CIA and other government officials have "attempted to squelch" the investigation by Italian authorities into the so-called Bulgarian/Soviet connection.

Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turk, was jailed by Italy for the assassination attempt, and officials of the country have charged Sergei Ivanov Antonov, former head of the Bulgarian Airlines office in Rome, with active complicity in the attempt.

NBC news reported recently that despite "even more persuasive" evidence that Agca had acted under the direction of Bulgaria, and therefore the Soviets, "some key officials of the CIA" are "actively discouraging American newsmen and Italian investigators."

"Part of the explanation lies in the ironic fact that many in the U.S. and western Europe would rather not be presented with proof of Soviet complicity at this time (because) that could shatter hopes for detente, trade and arms agreements," according to NBC.

Rep. McDonald, repeated his stand Saturday that, "there are very significant links between Agca and the Bulgarians and the Soviet secret police."

"I do not believe we should in any way stand in the way of getting the truth out to the public, because the attempt to kill the pope certainly was not a situation of one lone fanatic," concluded the Georgia congressman.